

(12) INTERNATIONAL APPLICATION PUBLISHED UNDER THE PATENT COOPERATION TREATY (PCT)

(19) World Intellectual Property
Organization
International Bureau



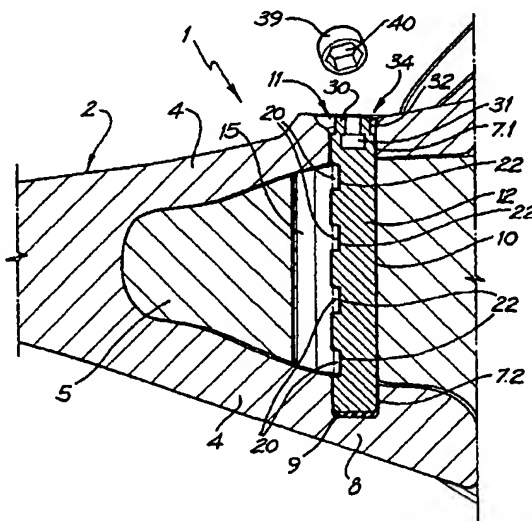
(43) International Publication Date
8 April 2004 (08.04.2004)

PCT

(10) International Publication Number
WO 2004/029371 A1

- (51) International Patent Classification⁷: E02F 9/28 (74) Agents: SHOOLMAN, David, Keith et al.; Halford & Co, 1 Market Street, Sydney, New South Wales 2000 (AU).
- (21) International Application Number: PCT/AU2003/001284 (81) Designated States (*national*): AE, AG, AL, AM, AT, AU, AZ, BA, BB, BG, BR, BY, BZ, CA, CH, CN, CO, CR, CU, CZ, DE, DK, DM, DZ, EC, EE, EG, ES, FI, GB, GD, GE, GH, GM, HR, HU, ID, IL, IN, IS, JP, KE, KG, KP, KR, KZ, LC, LK, LR, LS, LT, LU, LV, MA, MD, MG, MK, MN, MW, MX, MZ, NI, NO, NZ, OM, PG, PH, PL, PT, RO, RU, SC, SD, SE, SG, SK, SL, SY, TJ, TM, TN, TR, TT, TZ, UA, UG, US, UZ, VC, VN, YU, ZA, ZM, ZW.
- (22) International Filing Date: 29 September 2003 (29.09.2003)
- (25) Filing Language: English
- (26) Publication Language: English
- (30) Priority Data: 2002951728 30 September 2002 (30.09.2002) AU (84) Designated States (*regional*): ARIPO patent (GH, GM, KE, LS, MW, MZ, SD, SL, SZ, TZ, UG, ZM, ZW), Eurasian patent (AM, AZ, BY, KG, KZ, MD, RU, TJ, TM), European patent (AT, BE, BG, CH, CY, CZ, DE, DK, EE, ES, FI, FR, GB, GR, HU, IE, IT, LU, MC, NL, PT, RO, SE, SI, SK, TR), OAPI patent (BF, BJ, CF, CG, CI, CM, GA, GN, GQ, GW, ML, MR, NE, SN, TD, TG).
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- Published:
— with international search report
- For two-letter codes and other abbreviations, refer to the "Guidance Notes on Codes and Abbreviations" appearing at the beginning of each regular issue of the PCT Gazette.*

(54) Title: COMPONENT INTERLOCKING



(57) Abstract: There is disclosed a pair of components which, in the embodiment described, are a tooth (2) and adaptor (3) for earth-moving apparatus (1). The adaptor is for mounting the tooth on an earth-moving bucket, this mounting being releasable to allow replacement of the tooth when worn. The components define aligned passages (11) through which a locking pin (12) extends to retain the components together. The locking pin has formations (22) for engaging formations (20) on the first component when the pin is rotated from a free position into a locked position. The pin has an insertion recess (27) which is aligned with the formations (20) allowing the pin, in the free position, to be inserted into, or removed from, the aligned passages. The formations (20) are resiliently movable to stably engage the pin when in the locked position.

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COMPONENT INTERLOCKING

FIELD OF THE INVENTION

This invention relates to apparatus that includes two connected and interlocked components, and to a method of interlocking the components. Such interlocking may relate to a broad range of mechanical locking systems. By way of example, it may apply to the retention of ground engaging tools such as ripper teeth, or lip shrouds and wing shrouds, or rigging components for drag lines, such as shackle pins, clevis pins, or trunnion links. In one specific embodiment, the invention relates to material moving apparatus, particularly of the earth-moving type used in mining operations.

BACKGROUND TO THE INVENTION

A known type of apparatus corresponding to the above is in the form of earth-moving equipment which includes an earth-moving bucket which is driven by a prime-mover, and a number of components (such as earth-moving teeth or such as lip shrouds or other forms of replaceable wear protection means) each of which is mounted on a leading lip of the bucket by means of a further component in the form of a respective adaptor, the adaptor being fixed to the bucket. Where, for example, such components are constituted by earth moving teeth, the teeth are the components most subject to wear, and therefore it is desirable that provision be made for easy tooth replacement. The ease of tooth replacement, in turn, depends on the manner in which the teeth are attached to their respective adaptors.

A known manner of attaching such a tooth to its respective adaptor is by means of a locking pin which is inserted into aligned holes defined by the tooth and the adaptor, to prevent these from being separated from each other. Such a locking pin is usually held in place by means of friction or other forms of interference fits. Such a pin is required to be forced into place, and removed, usually by the use of a hammer or

similar tool that operates primarily on an impact basis. A disadvantage of such locking pins is the inherent risk of injury, and damage to components, due to the use of such tools. For example, the hammering might result in metal fragments breaking off the pin, and these could cause injury. In addition, the hammering action may
5 involve muscle injury.

It is an object of the present invention to overcome or substantially ameliorate at least one of the disadvantages of the prior art, or to provide a useful alternative.

10 SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

According to a first aspect of the invention there is provided apparatus including:

- a first component defining a first passage;
- a second component connectable with the first component and defining a
15 second passage, said passages being aligned when the components are connected to each other;
- a locking pin configured for being accommodated in the aligned passages thereby to prevent separation of the components, the pin being rotatable, when so accommodated, relative to the components, between
20 a locked position in which the pin engages at least one of the components to prevent withdrawal of the pin from the aligned passages, and
a free position in which the pin is slidably removable from the aligned passages to permit separation of the components.

- 25 In a preferred embodiment, the apparatus is configured such that when the first component and second component are connected to each other, they can substantially only be separated by effecting relative movement of the components in opposite disengagement directions, and such that the extending of the pin from the first passage into the second passage prevents said relative movement in said disengagement
30 directions. Preferably, the apparatus is configured such that the pin, when accommodated in said aligned passages, extends in a direction non-parallel to said disengagement directions. Then, preferably, the apparatus is configured such that the

pin, when accommodated in said aligned passages, extends in a direction substantially perpendicular to said disengagement directions.

Preferably, one of said components includes a first formation, and the pin has a second
5 formation configured for engagement with the first formation when the pin is in the locked position. In a preferred embodiment, the pin is of generally cylindrical shape and the second formation includes a pair of spaced walls at least partly defining a circumferentially extending slot in the pin, the pin being configured such that the first formation enters the slot as the pin is rotated from the free position to the locked
10 position.

Preferably, the pin has an axis of rotation about which the pin rotates between the free and locked positions, the pin further having a surface which constitutes a floor of the slot, the floor having a first end, with successive positions along the floor away from
15 the first end being disposed successively further, radially, from said axis, the first formation being configured to engage and ride along said floor when the pin is rotated from the free position to the locked position. The floor preferably has a second end opposite the first end thereof, and preferably defines a substantially flat or concave land area adjacent the second end for stably engaging the first formation when the pin
20 is in the locked position.

In a preferred embodiment, the slot extends helically about the pin such that upon rotation of the pin from the free position to the locked position, the first formation engages at least one of said walls to draw the pin further into said aligned passages,
25 and upon rotation of the pin from the locked position to the free position the first formation engages at least one of said walls to force the pin partly out of said aligned passages.

The pin preferably has therein an insertion recess extending, longitudinally relative to
30 the pin, to at least a first end of the pin, the insertion recess being configured to accommodate the first formation to permit insertion of the pin into said aligned passages when the insertion recess is aligned with said first formation.

In this case, in a preferred embodiment, the insertion recess extends to the first end of the pin but terminates at a position spaced from an opposite, second end of the pin, the pin preferably further having therein a withdrawal recess which is spaced, 5 circumferentially relative to the pin, from the insertion recess, and which extends longitudinally relative to the pin to said second end of the pin but which terminates at a position spaced from said first end of the pin, whereby the insertion recess permits insertion of the pin via one end of said aligned passages in a first longitudinal direction of the pin when the insertion recess is aligned with the first formation, and 10 the withdrawal recess permits withdrawal of the pin in said first direction, via an opposite end of said aligned passages, when the withdrawal recess is aligned with the first formation. In one preferred embodiment, the pin is configured such that, once having been inserted into the aligned passages with the insertion recess aligned with the first formation, the pin is in the free position and is rotatable to the locked position 15 in a particular rotational direction, and once having being rotated thus to the locked position, is rotatable in said particular rotational direction to a further position in which the withdrawal recess is aligned with the first formation.

In a preferred embodiment, the passage of one of the components is closed at one end 20 such that said aligned passages are closed at one end. The component having a passage closed at one end preferably includes a resilient element in that passage immediately adjacent the one closed end, wherein the pin, when accommodated in said aligned passages, is configured to abut against the resilient element.

25 Preferably, the passage of one of said components includes two coaxial spaced-apart sub-passages, and the passage of the other component is disposed between, and aligned with, said sub-passages when the components are connected to each other, to form said aligned passages.

30 In a preferred embodiment, at least part of said first formation is resiliently movable under a force exerted by the pin when the pin is rotated from said free position to said locked position. Then, preferably, the particular said component that includes said

first formation further includes resilient means for allowing said resilient movement of said part of the first formation, while urging said part against the pin.

In a preferred embodiment, said particular component includes a retaining element
5 which, in turn, includes an elastomeric support and an engagement element, wherein the support constitutes said resilient means and the engagement element includes said first formation and abuts the support. Then, in one preferred embodiment, the support defines a channel in which the engagement element is received. The support and engagement element are then preferably bonded to each other. The support preferably
10 defines a deformation passage extending substantially parallel to said channel, to facilitate resilient deformation of the support.

In a preferred embodiment, the pin includes a plurality of second formations and the engagement element is castellated so as to define a plurality of first formations, each
15 for engaging with a respective second formation when the pin is in the locked position.

In another preferred embodiment, said particular component includes a retaining element which defines a hole having a closed end and an opposite open end, the
20 retaining element including said resilient means within said hole and including said first formation, the first formation being movable along said hole and abutted against said resilient means, and protruding through said open end. In this embodiment, the first formation is preferably constituted by a ball, and the resilient means is preferably constituted by a coil spring or an elastomeric material such as rubber.

25

Preferably according to this other embodiment, the retaining element includes a plurality of said holes and said first formations and the pin includes a plurality of corresponding second formations.

30 In a preferred embodiment, the first and second components are machinery components, the first component being a wear-component configured to wear in use, and the second component is configured to support the first component.

In a preferred embodiment, the first component and second component are components of earth moving equipment. Then, in a preferred embodiment, the first component and second component are a tooth and adaptor, respectively, or a shroud and adaptor, respectively, of earth moving equipment, the adaptor being configured to mount the tooth or shroud, as the case may be, to an earth moving bucket. In another embodiment, the first component is a tooth or shroud, and the second component is a lip, of an earth moving bucket

10 The pin preferably includes a non-circular formation at an end of the pin for engagement with a rotatable tool to effect rotation of the pin between the free and locked positions..

Preferably, the pin, adjacent, but spaced from, one end, has a cavity therein, and an end portion extending from said one end to the cavity, the end portion having an aperture extending therethrough and opening through said one end and opening into the cavity, the end portion having an inner surface facing into the cavity away from said one end, the aperture permitting the insertion of a pin-removal tool therethrough into the cavity and withdrawal of the pin from said aligned passages by engagement of the pin-removal tool with said inner surface. The apparatus preferably includes a cap releasably engageable with the pin at said one end.

According to a second aspect of the invention there is provided a method of releasably interlocking a first component and a second component, wherein the first component defines a first passage and the second component defines a second passage, the method including the steps of:

connecting the first component to the second component so that the first and second passages are aligned with each other;

inserting a pin into the aligned passages so that, when so inserted, the pin is in a free position in which it is free to be selectively withdrawn from the aligned passages;

rotating the pin relative to the components, from the free position to a locked position in which the pin engages at least one of the components to prevent withdrawal of the pin from the aligned passages and hence to prevent separation of the components.

5

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

Preferred embodiments of the invention will now be described, by way of example only, with reference to the accompanying drawings in which:

10 Figure 1 is a partial schematic, exploded perspective view of material-moving apparatus in accordance with an embodiment of the invention;

Figure 2 is a schematic side elevation, shown partly cut away, of part of the apparatus of Figure 1;

15 Figure 3 is a schematic side elevation, shown partly cut away, of detail of the apparatus as shown in Figure 2;

Figures 4 and 5 are schematic side elevations, shown from different sides, of a locking pin according to an embodiment of the invention, Figure 5 being partly cut away;

20 Figure 6 is a schematic side elevation of a retaining element in accordance with an embodiment of the invention;

Figure 7 is a schematic plan view of the retaining element of Figure 6;

Figure 8 is a schematic side elevation of a retaining element in accordance with another embodiment of the invention;

25 Figure 9 is a schematic side section view through the retaining element of Figure 8;

Figures 10 and 11 are schematic side elevations, shown from different sides, of a locking pin according to a different embodiment of the invention to that shown in Figures 4 and 5;

30 Figures 12 and 13 are a schematic side elevations, shown partly cut away, of detail of apparatus similar to that shown in Figure 3, but in accordance with a different embodiment, with the locking pin shown in a free position, and a locked position, respectively; and

Figure 14 is a schematic side elevation, shown partly cut away, of detail of apparatus similar to that shown in Figure 3, but in accordance with yet a further embodiment.

5 DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Referring to the Figures 1 to 3, there is shown a material-moving apparatus 1 which, more specifically, is of the type used for earth-moving operations in the mining industry. The apparatus 1 includes a component in the form of a tooth 2 and a further
10 component in the form of an adaptor 3. The tooth 2 has a pair of spaced protrusions 4 and the adaptor 3 has a formation 5 which is generally complementarily shaped relative to the space defined between the protrusions 4. The adaptor 3 also has a pair of protrusions 6 defining a space between them.

15 The adaptor 3 is connectable to the tooth 2 by way of accommodating the formation 5 in the space between the protrusions 4, and is attached to a leading lip of an earth-moving bucket of a prime mover, which lip is received in the space between the protrusions 6 (the bucket and prime mover not being shown). The adaptor 3 is thus used for mounting the tooth 2 to the bucket. Generally, a number of such tooth-and-
20 adaptor combinations will be mounted, spaced from one another, to such a bucket in use.

The tooth 2 defines a passage generally designated 7, which consists of two aligned sub-passages 7.1 and 7.2, one in each of the protrusions 4. One of the sub-passages,
25 7.2, has a closure 8 at an outer end, with a resilient element 9 (see Figure 3) immediately adjacent the closure. In an alternative embodiment (not shown), the element 9 may be omitted. The adaptor 3 also defines a passage 10, in the formation 5, which is aligned with the sub-passages 7.1 and 7.2 when the tooth 2 and adaptor are connected to each other, as shown in Figures 2, 3 and 12 to 14. These passages 7.1,
30 7.2 and 10, when so aligned, are referred to below for convenience as the "aligned passages", generally designated 11.

A generally cylindrical locking pin 12 is accommodated in the aligned passages 11 for preventing the tooth 2 and adaptor 3 from being pulled apart in opposite directions transverse to the pin, and thus from being separated from each other. When so accommodated, the pin 12 is rotatable, about an axis 13 (see Figure 4), relative to the tooth 2 and adaptor 3, between a locked position and a free position, as will be described in more detail below.

The adaptor 3 defines a further passage 14 (see especially Figure 1) which is immediately adjacent to, and which opens along one side into, the passage 10. The adaptor 3 includes a retaining element, generally designated 15 (see Figures 6 to 9), which is accommodated within the passage 14.

In one preferred embodiment (see Figures 6 and 7), the retaining element 15 includes a resilient support 15.1 of an elastomeric material such as rubber. The support 15.1 defines a longitudinally extending channel 15.2 in which is located an engagement element 15.3. As can be seen in Figure 6, the engagement element 15.3 is castellated so as to define a series of formations, generally designated 20, in the form of engagement teeth, and these protrude into the passage 10 of the adaptor 3 (see Figures 2 and 3). The support 15.1 may be moulded together with the engagement element 15.3 so that they are effectively bonded together. One or more transverse passages (not shown) may be provided in the engagement element 15.3 such that when so moulded, the elastomeric material of the support 15.1 sets in the passages, effectively to key the support to the engagement element. The support 15.1 also defines a passage 15.4 which extends therethrough, substantially parallel to the channel 15.2, to facilitate deformation of the support when load is applied to the engagement element 15.3 as described further, below. Also as will be described in more detail below, each formation 20 is configured for engaging the pin 12.

In another embodiment (see Figures 8 and 9), the retaining element 15 defines a number of holes 16 each having a closed end 17 and an opposite open end 18. The retaining element 15 also has a resilient element 19 in the form of a coil spring (or, in another embodiment, in the form of an element of suitable elastomeric material such

as rubber) disposed within each hole 16 as well as a formation 20 which, in this embodiment, is in the form of a ball. Each ball formation 20 is abutted against the resilient element 19 and protrudes through the open end 18 of the respective hole 16, into the passage 10 of the adaptor 3.

5

In another embodiment (not shown) of the apparatus 1, the relative positioning of the passage 10 and the passage 14 is reversed (i.e. rotated through 180 degrees) relative to what is shown in Figure 1. Thus the passage 10 is disposed closer to the tooth 2 and the passage 14 further from the tooth. The advantage of this reversed relative
10 positioning is that, if any load is applied, in use, to the tooth 2 in a direction which tends to pull the tooth from the adaptor 3, this load is transferred by the pin 12 to that material of the adaptor which forms the part of the wall of the passage 10 closest to the tip of the tooth. By contrast, in the configuration as shown in Figure 1, such a load would be borne by the material of the adaptor which forms the inward projections
15 14.1 (see Figure 1), between the two passages 10 and 14.

Referring to Figures 4 and 5, there is shown one embodiment of the pin 12. In this embodiment, the pin 12 has a number of pairs of spaced walls 21, each pair defining a slot 22 which extends circumferentially and helically relative to the pin. Each slot 22
20 has a floor 23 having a first end 24. Each floor 23 is spaced a certain radial distance from the axis 13 at the first end 24, and is spaced successively further, radially, from the axis, at successive positions along the floor away from the first end. Thus the floors 23 are effectively radially outwardly sloped, in a direction away from the first ends 24. Adjacent a second end 25 of each floor 23, the floor levels out into a land
25 area 26, which, in different embodiments is flat or concave. As will be described in more detail below, the walls 21 and floors 23, and hence the slots 22 that they define, constitute formations for engaging the relevant formations 20.

The pin 12 also defines a recess 27, referred to below as an insertion recess, which
30 extends, longitudinally relative to the pin, to one end 28 of the pin.

The pin 12 also has, at an opposite end 29, a non-circular formation in the form of a hexagonal nut 30 which forms an integral part of the pin. Below the nut 30 there is a cavity 31 within the pin 12 (see Figure 5). Part of the cavity 31 is defined by the material of the pin 12 within the bounds of the nut 30, this portion of the pin being
5 referred to as an end portion 32. The end portion 32 has a slotted aperture 33 therein.

In use, the tooth 2 and adaptor 3 are connected to each other as mentioned above, by receiving the formation 5 within the space defined between the protrusions 4, such that the passage 10 and sub-passages 7.1 and 7.2 are aligned with each other to form
10 the aligned passages 11. As the tooth 2 is heavy, it may be provided with a lifting lug (not shown) so that the tooth can be moved into place relative to the adaptor 3 using a suitable sling or safety hook, which may in turn be operated via lifting equipment. The retaining element 15 is then inserted into the passage 14. The retaining element
15 15 is shaped so that it cannot be inserted into the passage 14 unless correctly orientated. The pin 12 is then inserted in the aligned passages 11 by first aligning the insertion recess 27 with the formations 20 that protrude into the passage 10, and then sliding the pin into place via the open end 34 of the aligned passages. The insertion recess 27 is adapted to accommodate the formations 20 to allow the pin 12 to be slid
20 into the aligned passages 11 unimpeded by these formations.

20 A suitable tool such as a spanner (not shown) is then used on the 30 nut to rotate the pin 12 about the axis 13. As the pin 12 rotates, the formations 20 engage the floors 23 and the walls 21 of the slots 22. The helical orientation of the slots 22 results in the formations 20 effectively drawing the pin 12 further into the aligned passages 11,
25 almost in the manner of a screw-thread.

As rotation of the pin 12 continues, the formations 20 ride along the floors 23. As a result of the sloped structure of the floors 23, as the formations 20 ride along the floors in this manner, the floors exert a force on the formations, urging them against
30 the biasing force of the support 15.1 or resilient elements 19 (depending on which embodiment of the retaining element 15 is employed) by deforming the support or resilient elements. The pin 12 is rotated to a position where the formations 20 engage

the land areas 26. The flatness or concavity of these areas 26 results in the pin 12 being held relatively stably against rotation, by the formations 20 and by the biasing force of the support 15.1 or resilient elements 19. The pin 12, when in this position, is prevented, by engagement of the formations 20 with the walls 21 of the respective slots 22, from being slid out of the aligned passages 11. Thus the pin 12, when in this position, also serves to prevent separation of the tooth 2 and adaptor 3. This position of the pin 12, in which it cannot be withdrawn, may be considered as a "locked position". When in this position, the end 28 of the pin 12 abuts, and slightly deforms, the resilient element 9 where this resilient element is provided. This also serves to add to the stability of the holding in place of the pin 12, by urging the walls 21 against the formations 20 to increase friction forces.

The closure 8 prevents the pin 12 from falling out the lower end of the aligned passages 11. It also prevents dirt and other particles from entering the lower end of the sub-passage 7.2. Such dirt and particles might otherwise enter the aligned passages 11 via that lower end of the sub-passage 7.2, and when compacted could become trapped at the interface between the pin 12 and the walls of the aligned passages 11, thereby obstructing removal of the pin.

Figure 13 illustrates the location of formations 20 within the slots 22 of the pin 12 when the pin is in the locked position.

When it is desired to separate the tooth 2 and adaptor 3 from each other, the same tool that was used to rotate the pin 12 to the locked position can be used, on the nut 30, to rotate the pin 12 to the position in which the insertion recess 27 is aligned, once again, with the formations 20. In this position, the pin 12 may be slid out of the aligned passages 11 substantially unimpeded by the formations 20. Thus, this position of the pin 12 may be regarded as a "free position". In a preferred form of this embodiment, the pin is rotated through 90 degrees between the free position and the locked position. When rotating the pin 12 from the locked position to the free position, the helical orientation of the slots 22 results in the formations 20 forcing the pin partly out of the aligned passages 11. Once the pin 12 is in the free position, a suitable tool (not

shown) can be inserted through the slotted aperture 33, and engaged with an inner surface 35 of the end portion 32 of the nut 30, "bayonet" fashion, to pull the pin free from the aligned passages 11. In another embodiment (not shown), instead of having the cavity 31, and instead of having the aperture 33 being slotted, the aperture 33 is provided with an internal screw thread and is configured for a suitable tool, such as a lifting eye bolt, having a complementary screw thread, to be screwed into the aperture for removing the pin 12.

Figure 12 illustrates the formations 20 being outside of the slots 22 of the pin 12, when the pin is in the free position.

Referring to Figures 10 and 11, there is shown another embodiment of the pin 12. In this embodiment the slots 22 do not extend helically and, in addition to the insertion recess 27 which extends to the end 28 of the pin 12, there is also provided a withdrawal recess 36. The withdrawal recess 36 is spaced from the insertion recess 27, circumferentially relative to the pin 12 as shown, and extends, longitudinally relative to the pin, to the opposite end 29 of the pin. This embodiment of the pin 12 is suitable for use with an embodiment of the tooth 2 which does not have a closure 8, that is, an embodiment in which the aligned passages 11 are open not only at the end 34, but also at the opposite end 37, as shown in Figure 12, 13 and 14.

In this embodiment of the pin 12, each floor 23 is sloped radially outwardly, relative to the axis 13, toward the land areas 26 of the slots 22, from both sides of the land areas. As a result, once the pin 12 has been inserted and rotated to the locked position as described above, it can thereafter be rotated, in the same direction, so that the formations 20 ride along the floor 23 on the opposite side of the land area 26 to that along which they rode when the pin was first rotated to the locked position, until the withdrawal recess 36 is aligned with the formations. In this position, as the withdrawal recess 36 extends all the way to the end 29 of the pin 12, the pin may be pushed from the aligned passages 11 via the end 37 thereof (i.e. the bottom end as shown in Figures 12, 13 and 14) to remove it when it is desired to separate the tooth 2 and adaptor 3 from each other. It will be appreciated that the position in which the

withdrawal recess 36 is aligned with the formations 20, that is, the position in which the pin 12 can be removed from the aligned passages 11 unimpeded by the formations, may also be considered as a "free position" of the pin. In a preferred form of this embodiment, the insertion recess 27 and withdrawal recess 36 are positioned such that
5 the pin 12 is rotated through 90 degrees between the locked position and each of the respective free positions.

In this embodiment of the pin 12, the end 28 of the pin may be substantially perpendicular to the axis 13 as shown in Figures 12 and 13, or it may be angled as
10 shown in Figure 14, so as to match the angle of the outer surface 38 of the lowermost protrusion 4 of the tooth 2 (this particular protrusion being designated 4.1 in Figure 14). The angling of the end 28 of the pin 12 in this way is advantageous as it limits the extent to which debris and other contaminants may enter the sub-passage 7.2 which contaminants might possibly clog the interface between the pin and the sub-
15 passage 7.2 thus restricting removal of the pin.

A polyurethane nut cap 39 (shown removed in Figures 2 and 3) is provided for removably covering the nut 30. The nut cap 39 has an inner aperture 40 (see Figure 3) having a shape complementary to that of the nut 30. Accordingly, the nut cap 39 can
20 fit snugly on the nut 30, to protect it and prevent the ingress of matter into the cavity 31 via the slotted aperture 33.

As the pin 12 can slide relatively easily into the aligned passages 11 and then be rotated to the locked position, the need to hammer the pin in place, as required in prior
25 art pins, is avoided. This, in turn, avoids the dangers associated with such hammering, including metal fragments breaking off the pin or the hammering tool which could cause injury, and avoids muscle injury that could be caused by the hammering action. When it is desired to remove the pin 12 to separate the tooth 2 and adaptor 3 from each other, for example where the tooth has worn down and needs to be replaced, the
30 action of rotating the pin 12 from the locked position to the free position, and then sliding the pin from the aligned passages 11, has similar advantages.

In the embodiment including the closure 8, where the slots 22 extend helically, the configuration of the slots further facilitates this pin-removal process as the pin is partly forced from the aligned passages 11 on rotation. The closure 8 also prevents the pin 12 inadvertently sliding out through the lower end of the sub-passage 7.2 when the pin is in its free position. On the other hand, in the embodiment where there is no closure 8, the pin 12 can be pushed through the lower end of the sub-passage 7.2 so that the need to withdraw it from the aligned passages via the same end through which it was inserted, is avoided.

Although the invention is described with reference to specific embodiments, it will be understood by those skilled in the art that it is not limited to these embodiments, and may be embodied in many other forms. Thus, instead of the tooth 2 and adaptor 3, a pin similar to the pin 12 may be used to interlock two other components. Such other components may, for example, be a tooth and a lip of an earth moving bucket, or another type of wear component and its mounting, or a lip or wing shroud and its mounting, or rigging components for drag lines, such as shackles or clevises and their shackle- or clevis- pins, or trunnions and their links.

CLAIMS

1. Apparatus including:
 - a first component defining a first passage;
 - 5 a second component connectable with the first component and defining a second passage, said passages being aligned when the components are connected to each other;
 - a locking pin configured for being accommodated in the aligned passages thereby to prevent separation of the components, the pin being rotatable, when so
 - 10 accommodated, relative to the components, between
 - a locked position in which the pin engages at least one of the components to prevent withdrawal of the pin from the aligned passages, and
 - a free position in which the pin is slidably removable from the aligned passages to permit separation of the components.
- 15 2. Apparatus according to claim 1 configured such that when the first component and second component are connected to each other, they can substantially only be separated by effecting relative movement of the components in opposite disengagement directions, and wherein the extending of the pin from the first passage
- 20 into the second passage prevents said relative movement in said disengagement directions.
3. Apparatus according to claim 2 configured such that the pin, when accommodated in said aligned passages, extends in a direction non-parallel to said
- 25 disengagement directions.
4. Apparatus according to claim 3 configured such that the pin, when accommodated in said aligned passages, extends in a direction substantially perpendicular to said disengagement directions.

5. Apparatus according to any one of claims 1 to 4 wherein one of said components includes a first formation, and the pin has a second formation configured for engagement with the first formation when the pin is in the locked position.

5 6. Apparatus according to claim 5 wherein the pin is of generally cylindrical shape and the second formation includes a pair of spaced walls at least partly defining a circumferentially extending slot in the pin, the pin being configured such that the first formation enters the slot as the pin is rotated from the free position to the locked position.

10

7. Apparatus according to claim 6 wherein the pin has an axis of rotation about which the pin rotates between the free and locked positions, the pin further having a surface which constitutes a floor of the slot, the floor having a first end, with successive positions along the floor away from the first end being disposed successively further, radially, from said axis, the first formation being configured to engage and ride along said floor when the pin is rotated from the free position to the locked position.

8. Apparatus according to claim 7 wherein the floor has a second end opposite the first end thereof, and defines a land area adjacent the second end for stably engaging the first formation when the pin is in the locked position.

9. Apparatus according to claim 8 wherein the land areas is substantially flat.

25 10. Apparatus according to claim 8 wherein the land areas is substantially concave.

11. Apparatus according to any one of claim 6 to 10 wherein the slot extends helically about the pin such that upon rotation of the pin from the free position to the locked position, the first formation engages at least one of said walls to draw the pin further into said aligned passages, and upon rotation of the pin from the locked

position to the free position the first formation engages at least one of said walls to force the pin partly out of said aligned passages.

12. Apparatus according to any one of claims 5 to 11 wherein the pin has therein
5 an insertion recess extending, longitudinally relative to the pin, to at least a first end of the pin, the insertion recess being configured to accommodate the first formation to permit insertion of the pin into said aligned passages when the insertion recess is aligned with said first formation.
- 10 13. Apparatus according to claim 12 wherein the insertion recess extends to the first end of the pin but terminates at a position spaced from an opposite, second end of the pin.
14. Apparatus according to claim 13 wherein the pin further has therein a
15 withdrawal recess which is spaced, circumferentially relative to the pin, from the insertion recess, and which extends longitudinally relative to the pin to said second end of the pin but which terminates at a position spaced from said first end of the pin, whereby the insertion recess permits insertion of the pin via one end of said aligned passages in a first longitudinal direction of the pin when the insertion recess is aligned
20 with the first formation, and the withdrawal recess permits withdrawal of the pin in said first direction, via an opposite end of said aligned passages, when the withdrawal recess is aligned with the first formation.
15. Apparatus according to claim 14 wherein the pin is configured such that, once
25 having been inserted into the aligned passages with the insertion recess aligned with the first formation, the pin is in the free position and is rotatable to the locked position in a particular rotational direction, and once having being rotated thus to the locked position, is rotatable in said particular rotational direction to a further position in which the withdrawal recess is aligned with the first formation.

16. Apparatus according to any one of claims 5 to 15 wherein the passage of one of the components is closed at one end such that said aligned passages are closed at one end.
- 5 17. Apparatus according to claim 16 wherein the component having a passage closed at one end preferably includes a resilient element in that passage immediately adjacent the one closed end, wherein the pin, when accommodated in said aligned passages, is configured to abut against the resilient element.
- 10 18. Apparatus according to any one of claims 5 to 17 wherein the passage of one of said components includes two coaxial spaced-apart sub-passages, and the passage of the other component is disposed between, and aligned with, said sub-passages when the components are connected to each other, to form said aligned passages.
- 15 19. Apparatus according to any one of claims 5 to 18 wherein at least part of said first formation is resiliently movable under a force exerted by the pin when the pin is rotated from said free position to said locked position.
- 20 20. Apparatus according to claim 19 wherein the particular said component that includes said first formation further includes resilient means for allowing said resilient movement of said part of the first formation, while urging said part against the pin.
- 25 21. Apparatus according to claim 20 wherein said particular component includes a retaining element, the retaining element including an elastomeric support and an engagement element, wherein the support constitutes said resilient means and the engagement element includes said first formation and abuts the support.
- 30 22. Apparatus according to claim 21 wherein the support defines a channel in which the engagement element is received.
23. Apparatus according to claim 22 wherein the support and engagement element are bonded to each other.

24. Apparatus according to claim 22 or claim 23 wherein the support defines a deformation passage extending substantially parallel to said channel, to facilitate resilient deformation of the support.

5

25. Apparatus according to any one of claims 21 to 24 wherein the pin includes a plurality of second formations and the engagement element is castellated so as to define a plurality of first formations, each for engaging with a respective second formation when the pin is in the locked position.

10

26. Apparatus according to claim 20 wherein said particular component includes a retaining element which defines a hole having a closed end and an opposite open end, the retaining element including said resilient means within said hole and including said first formation, the first formation being movable along said hole and abutted against said resilient means, and protruding through said open end.

15

27. Apparatus according to claim 26 wherein the first formation is constituted by a ball.

20 28. Apparatus according to claim 26 or claim 27 wherein the resilient means is constituted by a coil spring

29. Apparatus according to claim 26 or claim 27 wherein the resilient means is constituted by an elastomeric material.

25

30. Apparatus according to any one of claims 26 to 29 wherein the retaining element includes a plurality of said holes and said first formations and the pin includes a plurality of corresponding second formations.

30 31. Apparatus according to any one of the preceding claims wherein the first and second components are machinery components, the first component being a wear-

component configured to wear in use, and the second component is configured to support the first component.

32. Apparatus according to any one of the preceding claims wherein the first
5 component and second component are components of earth moving equipment.

33. Apparatus according to claim 32 wherein the first component and second
component are a tooth and adaptor, respectively, of earth moving equipment, the
adaptor being configured to mount the tooth to an earth moving bucket.

10

34. Apparatus according to claim 32 wherein the first component and second
component are a shroud and adaptor, respectively, of earth moving equipment, the
adaptor being configured to mount the shroud to an earth moving bucket.

15 35. Apparatus according to claim 32 wherein the first component is one of a tooth
and shroud, and the second component is a lip of an earth moving bucket.

36. Apparatus according to any one of the preceding claims wherein the pin
includes a non-circular formation at an end of the pin for engagement with a rotatable
20 tool to effect rotation of the pin between the free and locked positions.

37. Apparatus according to any one of the preceding claims wherein the pin,
adjacent, but spaced from, one end, has a cavity therein, and an end portion extending
from said one end to the cavity, the end portion having an aperture extending
25 therethrough and opening through said one end and opening into the cavity, the end
portion having an inner surface facing into the cavity away from said one end, the
aperture permitting the insertion of a pin-removal tool therethrough into the cavity and
withdrawal of the pin from said aligned passages by engagement of the pin-removal
tool with said inner surface.

30

38. Apparatus according to claim 36 including a cap releasably engageable with
the pin at said one end.

39. A method of releasably interlocking a first component and a second component, wherein the first component defines a first passage and the second component defines a second passage, the method including the steps of:

5 connecting the first component to the second component so that the first and second passages are aligned with each other;

 inserting a pin into the aligned passages so that, when so inserted, the pin is in a free position in which it is free to be selectively withdrawn from the aligned passages;

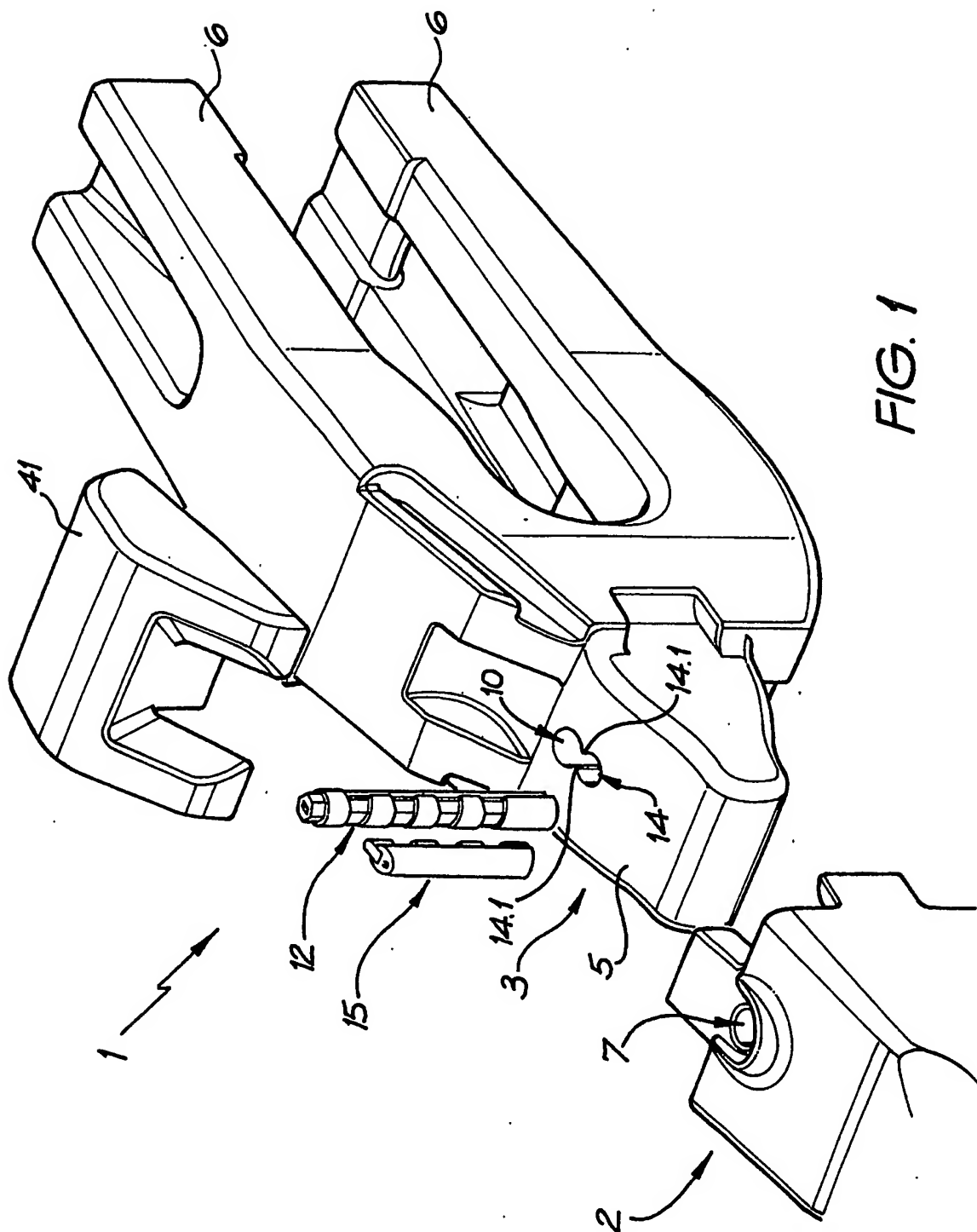
10 rotating the pin relative to the components, from the free position to a locked position in which the pin engages at least one of the components to prevent withdrawal of the pin from the aligned passages and hence to prevent separation of the components.

15 40. The method of claim 39 wherein the step of connecting the first component to the second component includes connecting the components such that they can substantially only be separated by effecting relative movement of the components in opposite disengagement directions, and the step of inserting the pin includes inserting the pin such that, when the pin extends from the first passage into the second passage,
20 the pin prevents said relative movement in said disengagement directions.

41. Apparatus substantially as herein described with reference to Figures 1 to 14.

42. A method substantially as herein described with reference to Figures 1 to 14.

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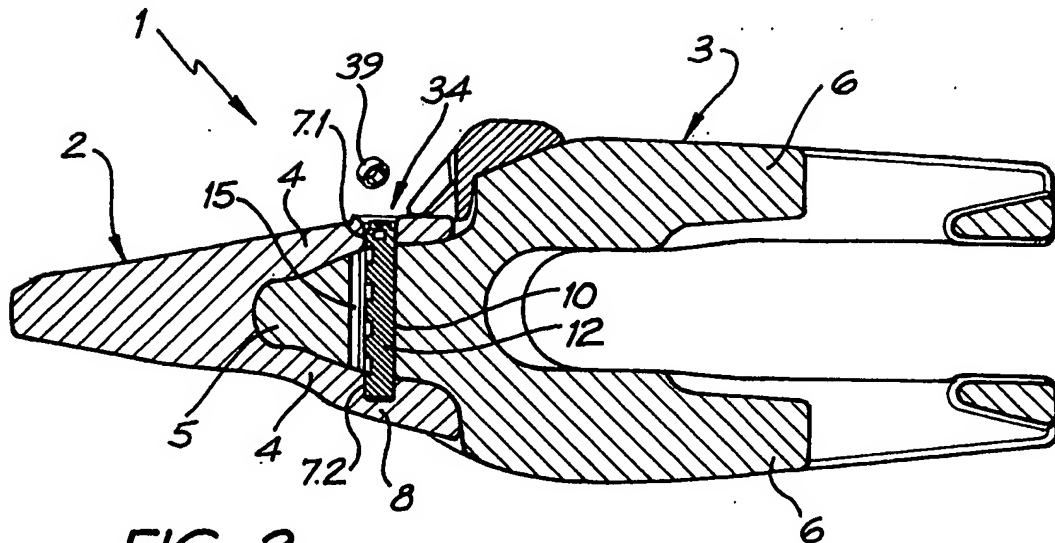


FIG. 2

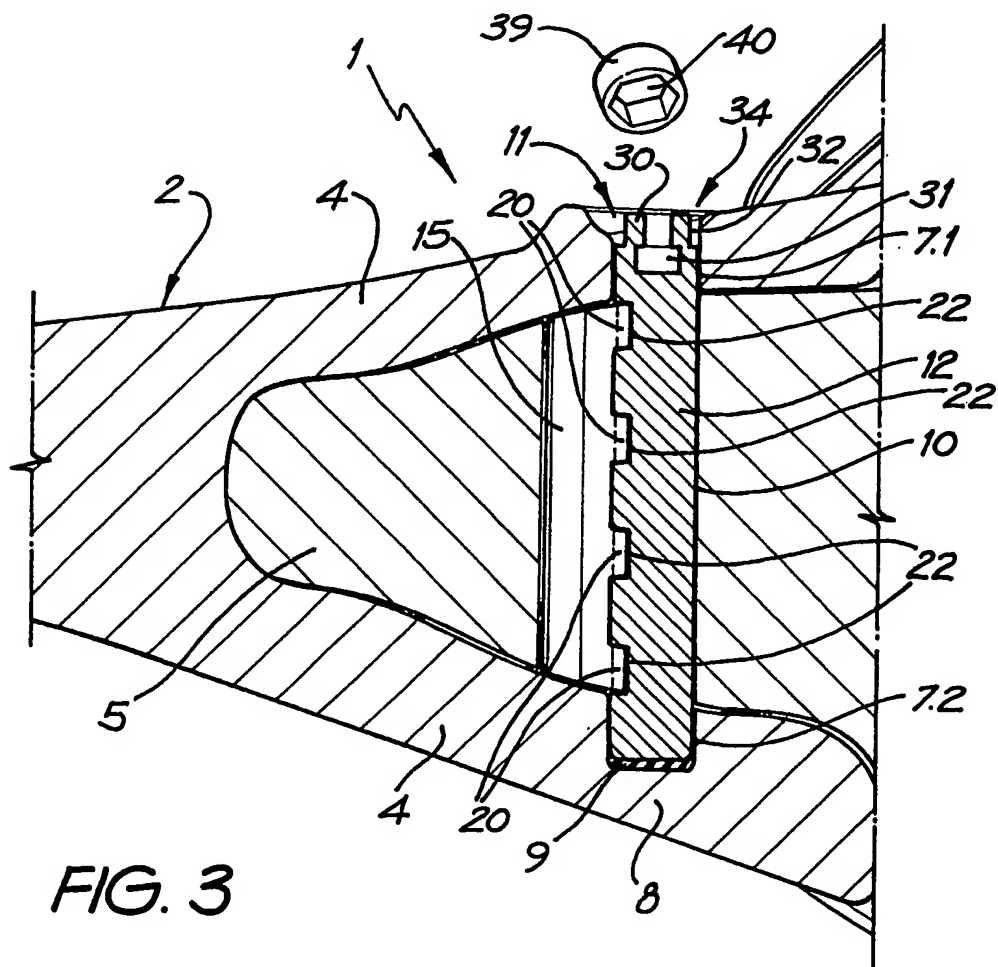
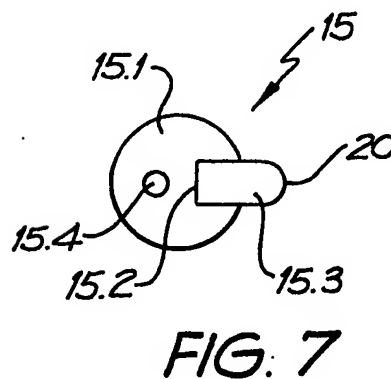
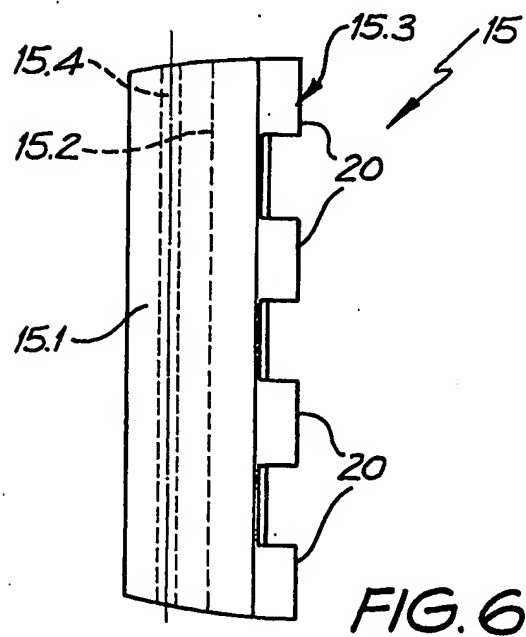
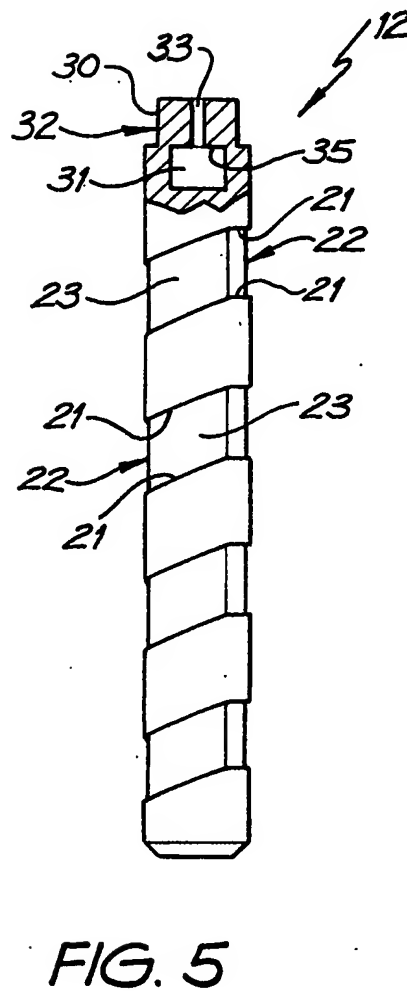
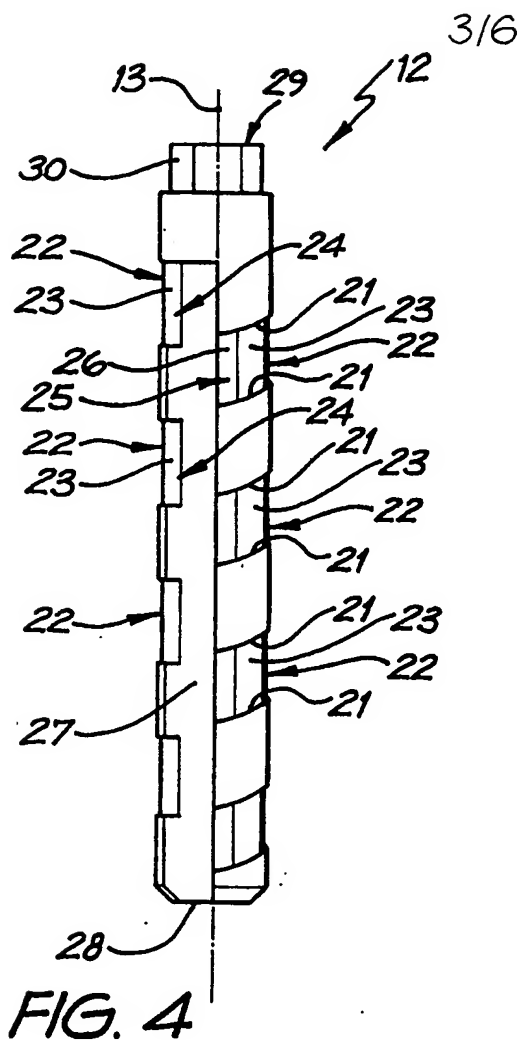


FIG. 3



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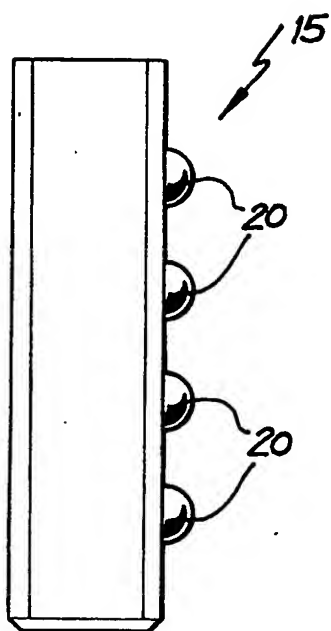


FIG. 8

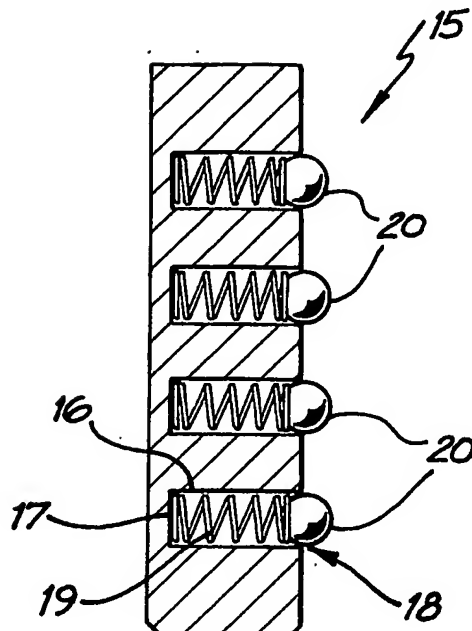


FIG. 9

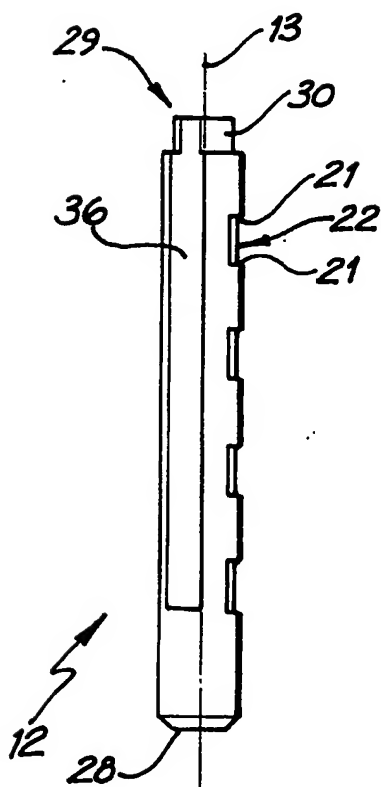


FIG. 10

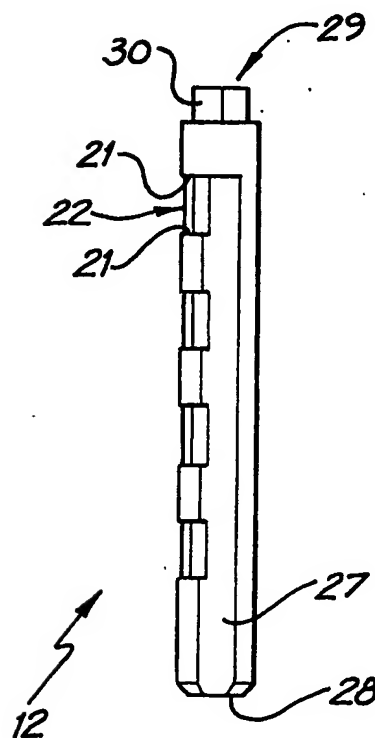


FIG. 11



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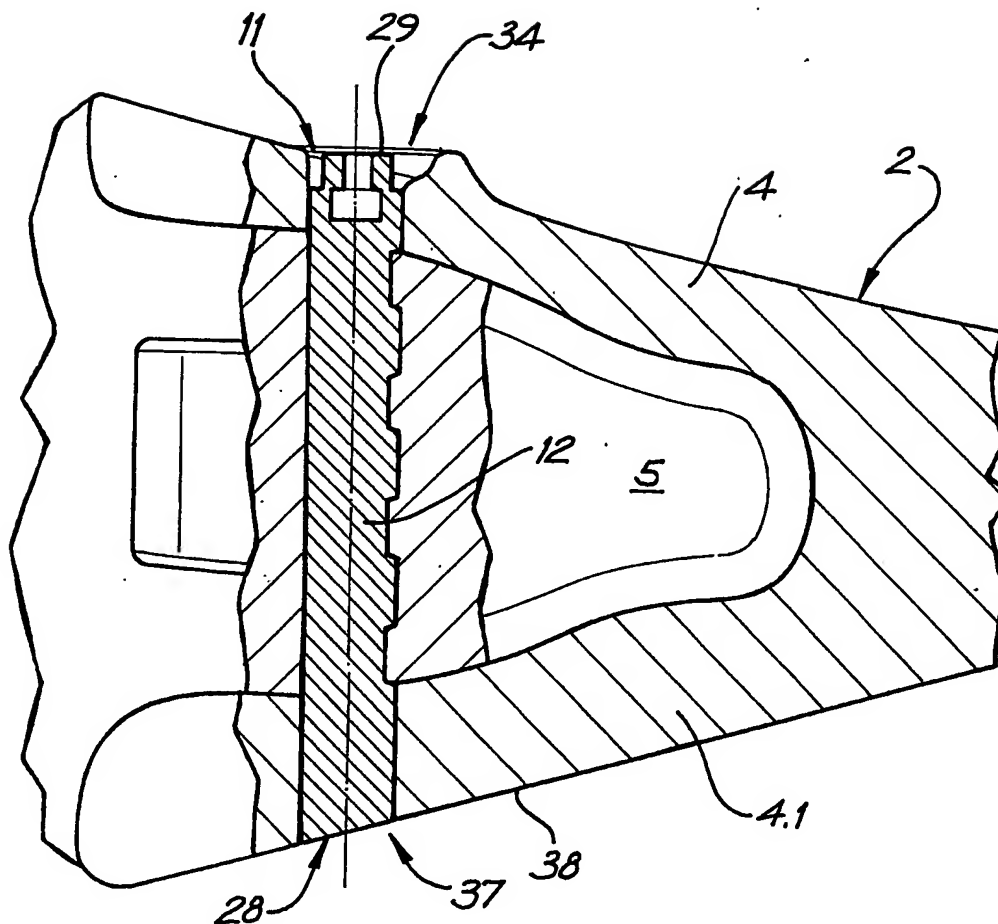


FIG. 14

INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International application No.
PCT/AU03/01284

A. CLASSIFICATION OF SUBJECT MATTER				
Int. Cl. ⁷ : E02F 9/28				
According to International Patent Classification (IPC) or to both national classification and IPC				
B. FIELDS SEARCHED				
Minimum documentation searched (classification system followed by classification symbols)				
Documentation searched other than minimum documentation to the extent that such documents are included in the fields searched AU: IPC E02F 9/28				
Electronic data base consulted during the international search (name of data base and, where practicable, search terms used) Dwpi: E02F 9/28 AND (pin+ or shaft+ or retain+) AND (rotat+ or turn+)				
C. DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT				
Category*	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.		
X	US 5983534 A (ROBINSON et al) 16 November 1999 The whole document	1-5, 16-42		
X	AU 53866/98 A1 (WRIGHT EQUIPMENT COMPANY (PROPRIETARY) LIMITED) 02 September 1999 The whole document	1-5, 16-20 and 31-42		
X	AU 72240/00 A1 (CUTTING EDGES PTY LIMITED) 14 June 2001 The whole document	1-5, 16-20 and 31-42		
X	US 2002/0000053 A1 (ADAMIC et al) 3 January 2002 The whole document	1-5, 16-20 and 31-42		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Further documents are listed in the continuation of Box C <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> See patent family annex				
<table style="width: 100%; border: none;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%; vertical-align: top;"> <p>* Special categories of cited documents:</p> <p>"A" document defining the general state of the art which is not considered to be of particular relevance</p> <p>"B" earlier application or patent but published on or after the international filing date</p> <p>"L" document which may throw doubts on priority claim(s) or which is cited to establish the publication date of another citation or other special reason (as specified)</p> <p>"O" document referring to an oral disclosure, use, exhibition or other means</p> <p>"P" document published prior to the international filing date but later than the priority date claimed</p> </td> <td style="width: 50%; vertical-align: top;"> <p>"T" later document published after the international filing date or priority date and not in conflict with the application but cited to understand the principle or theory underlying the invention</p> <p>"X" document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered novel or cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is taken alone</p> <p>"Y" document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is combined with one or more other such documents, such combination being obvious to a person skilled in the art</p> <p>"&" document member of the same patent family</p> </td> </tr> </table>			<p>* Special categories of cited documents:</p> <p>"A" document defining the general state of the art which is not considered to be of particular relevance</p> <p>"B" earlier application or patent but published on or after the international filing date</p> <p>"L" document which may throw doubts on priority claim(s) or which is cited to establish the publication date of another citation or other special reason (as specified)</p> <p>"O" document referring to an oral disclosure, use, exhibition or other means</p> <p>"P" document published prior to the international filing date but later than the priority date claimed</p>	<p>"T" later document published after the international filing date or priority date and not in conflict with the application but cited to understand the principle or theory underlying the invention</p> <p>"X" document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered novel or cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is taken alone</p> <p>"Y" document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is combined with one or more other such documents, such combination being obvious to a person skilled in the art</p> <p>"&" document member of the same patent family</p>
<p>* Special categories of cited documents:</p> <p>"A" document defining the general state of the art which is not considered to be of particular relevance</p> <p>"B" earlier application or patent but published on or after the international filing date</p> <p>"L" document which may throw doubts on priority claim(s) or which is cited to establish the publication date of another citation or other special reason (as specified)</p> <p>"O" document referring to an oral disclosure, use, exhibition or other means</p> <p>"P" document published prior to the international filing date but later than the priority date claimed</p>	<p>"T" later document published after the international filing date or priority date and not in conflict with the application but cited to understand the principle or theory underlying the invention</p> <p>"X" document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered novel or cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is taken alone</p> <p>"Y" document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is combined with one or more other such documents, such combination being obvious to a person skilled in the art</p> <p>"&" document member of the same patent family</p>			
Date of the actual completion of the international search 16 October 2003		Date of mailing of the international search report 23 October 2003		
Name and mailing address of the ISA/AU AUSTRALIAN PATENT OFFICE PO BOX 200, WODEN ACT 2606, AUSTRALIA E-mail address: pct@ipaustalia.gov.au Facsimile No. (02) 6285 3929		Authorized officer LEOPOLD FILIPOVIC Telephone No : (02) 6283 2105		

INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International application No.

PCT/AU03/01284

C (Continuation). DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT		
Category*	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.
X	US 5435084 A (IMMEL) 25 July 1995 The whole document	1-5, 16-20 and 31-42
X,P	US 2003/0070330 A1 (OLDS et al) 17 April 2003 The whole document	1-5, 16-42
X,P	WO 03/048462 A1 (HENSLEY INDUSTRIES, INC.) 12 June 2003 The whole document	1-5, 16-42
A	US 2002/0023375 A1 (PIPPINS) 28 February 2002 The whole document	16

INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

Information on patent family members

International application No.

PCT/AU03/01284

This Annex lists the known "A" publication level patent family members relating to the patent documents cited in the above-mentioned international search report. The Australian Patent Office is in no way liable for these particulars which are merely given for the purpose of information.

Patent Document Cited in Search Report		Patent Family Member			
US	5983534	AU	85201/98		
US	5435084	AU	80405/94	CA	2120087
				ZA	9409759
US	2002000053	AU	54094/01	CA	2312550
AU	72240/00				
AU	53866/99	CA	2340088	EP	1104574
		NZ	510143	IT	RM980541
				WO	0010142
US	2003070330				
WO	03048462	US	2003101627		
US	2002023375	AU	53515/00	CA	2316026
		US	6374521	US	6119378
				ZA	200004252
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